

MICHIGAN HOSPICE

& PALLIATIVE CARE ORGANIZATION

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April 25, 2012

Chairman Opsommer & Transportation Committee Members,

On behalf of the Michigan Hospice & Palliative Care Organization (MHPCO), I am very excited to speak to you today in support of HB 4434. We greatly appreciate the opportunity to discuss this legislation in your committee and explain how this bill will help our members and the numerous hospice providers across Michigan. We would also like to extend our sincerest thanks to Rep. Joel Johnson for introducing this legislation. His efforts to make today possible are greatly appreciated and we are fortunate to have him as an advocate for hospice in Lansing.

MHPCO supports the creation of a hospice license plate as a means of raising awareness about hospice services available to Michigan residents. Many of you are familiar with hospice through close experiences or through the outstanding work of hospice providers in your districts. Hospice is a covered benefit through most insurance carriers, along with Medicare and Medicaid. It provides nursing care, home health aides, physician services, spiritual care, counseling services, bereavement support, medications, medical supplies, and medical equipment for patients and families all over our state. All of these services are paid on a per day basis at about \$145 per day.

MHPCO, the state trade association for hospice and palliative care providers, represents 90% of the hospice providers currently licensed in Michigan. Our role is to provide education, training, resources, advocacy, networking and outreach for all of our members that span the entire state.

Since hospice is still relatively new in the scope of healthcare services, it is often misunderstood. We see this firsthand in Michigan as our state has one of the lowest lengths of stay in the nation – currently **ranking 43 of 50 states according to most recent Medicare data**. This means patients are not enrolling in hospice until they are close to death. Unfortunately, it also means patients *and their families* are missing out on some of the most important care and quality of life available through hospice services.

When surveyed, a majority of hospice families indicate they wish they would have known about hospice sooner. Most people, unless they have experienced hospice for themselves, have a very limited understanding of the role hospice plays in healthcare and when to request hospice services. The hospice license plate created in HB 4434 would help alleviate this problem and raise awareness all over our state.

Advocating for hospice and palliative care in Michigan

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Hospice license plate sales would allow MHPCO to provide necessary support services for our members that we have been unable assist to date: Increased access to education for hospice professionals, awareness campaigns for consumers so they know when it's time for hospice care, printing of additional consumer guides to hospice services, and outreach tools for hospice providers to use in community education would all be made possible through the proceeds raised by the hospice license plate.

A recent study conducted by MHPCO showed great enthusiasm in the hospice community to purchase a license plate. Michigan hospices employ over 3000 individuals and thousands of volunteers. And, with over 35,000 residents cared for by hospices in Michigan annually, many of these employees, volunteers and grateful families will support hospice and share their positive experience with others by purchasing a hospice license plate! MHPCO will provide the necessary \$15,000 fee to start this license plate. We will make sure 2,000 hospice license plates are sold in the first year of distribution to meet the Secretary of State's guidelines. We will also work to ensure 500 plates are sold annually in subsequent years, for five years, meeting the remaining conditions. In addition, MHPCO will provide the Department of Treasury detailed reports on the disbursement of organizational funds generated by the license plate. Transparency is an issue we take very seriously and we can assure committee members all uses of these funds will be very well documented.

We urge your support of HB 4434 in the House Transportation Committee and on the House floor in the days ahead. This is legislation that will help provide even greater services for patients and families across Michigan. I appreciate the opportunity to speak with you today and I would be happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

Lisa Ashley
CEO, Michigan Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (MHPCO)

MICHIGAN HOSPICE

2012 Membership Data

& PALLIATIVE CARE ORGANIZATION

Total Members

Hospice Providers	91	Includes all branch offices
Associate Members	7	
Individuals	29	

New Members

Hospice Providers	1
Associate Members	1
Individuals	4

Total Hospice Providers in Michigan

Total licensed hospice providers	102
Additional branch locations	17
Total hospice programs/branches	119

Average length of stay:

63	Rank 35 of 50 states
Median length of stay: 19	Rank 43 of 50 states

Hospice utilization:

48%	Medicare deaths in MI
41%	National average Medicare deaths with hospice

NOTE: high utilization rate with short length of stay is NOT serving patients/families well nor is it cost effective!